

Hegemony, rebellion and history: Flodoard's *Historia Remensis ecclesiae* in Ottonian perspective

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This article considers the growth of Ottonian hegemony through a close examination of Flodoard's *Historia Remensis ecclesiae*. Specifically, it scrutinises Flodoard's laconic account of a property dispute between the church of Rheims and Conrad the Red, Otto the Great's powerful duke of Lotharingia. Reading Flodoard's testimony alongside diplomatic evidence and Ottonian narratives, this study argues that the controversy was a factor in Conrad's rebellion against Otto in 953. Both the central role of Rheims' property in an Ottonian political conflict and Flodoard's silence on numerous aspects of the affair reveal that the church was deeply enmeshed in Ottonian politics. The *Historia* therefore offers an unrecognised angle on the expansion of Ottonian power, while further investigation of its content suggests that this emergent hegemony may indeed have been welcomed by Flodoard and his superiors at Rheims.

Keywords: Flodoard; Otto I; Conrad the Red; Rheims; historiography; property; hegemony; rebellion

Introduction

From modest origins in Saxony, the kings of the Ottonian dynasty (919–1024) swiftly consolidated their rule over the warring post-Carolingian duchies in the early tenth century.

They went on to exercise a real hegemony over the neighbouring West Frankish, Burgundian and Italian kingdoms (formally incorporating the last into their own) and to supervise the establishment of the Church in newly subjugated Slavic and Danish lands.¹ The long reign of Otto I (936–73) was a watershed in the development of this domination, his mastery of Europe exemplified by his imperial coronation in Rome in 962 (the title having been left unclaimed since 924).² The rapid ascent of Ottonian Germany has been attributed to numerous factors over the years, with scholars variously pointing to their unparalleled military prowess, calculated marriage alliances, effective marshalling of an ‘imperial church system’, and the institutionalisation of new ritualised bonds of ‘friendship’ (*amicitia*) with regional elites.³ These policies and strategies all propelled the Ottonians’ success and helped explain how they were able to rule an apparently ‘stateless’ kingdom with relatively little administrative capacity.⁴ The regime’s success, moreover, was celebrated by court writers such as Liudprand of Cremona and Widukind of Corvey, who sought to further justify

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¹ The following abbreviations are used in this paper: *DO I*: T. Sickel, ed., *Die Urkunden Konrad I., Heinrich I. und Otto I.* MGH Diplomatum regum et imperatorum Germaniae 1 (Hanover: Hahn, 1879–84); Flodoard, *Annales*: Flodoard of Rheims, *Les annales de Flodoard*, ed. P. Lauer (Paris: Picard, 1905); *HRE*: Flodoard of Rheims, *Historia Remensis ecclesiae*, ed. M. Stratmann. MGH Scriptorum in folio 36 (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1998); MGH: Monumenta Germaniae Historica.

T. Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages, c.800–1056* (London: Longman, 1991), 137–80, provides a clear overview of these developments.

² For a recent biographical study, M. Becher, *Otto der Große, Kaiser und Reich: eine Biographie* (Munich: Beck, 2012).

³ Of a vast literature, seminal works include H. Beumann and H. Büttner, *Das Kaisertum Ottos des Großen. Zwei Vorträge*, 2nd edn. (Sigmaringen: J. Thorbecke, 1963); H. Keller, ‘Das Kaisertum Ottos des Großen im Verständnis seiner Zeit’, *Deutsches Archiv* 20 (1964): 325–88; K.J. Leyser, *Rule and Conflict in an Early Medieval Society: Ottonian Saxony* (London: Edward Arnold, 1979); G. Althoff and H. Keller, *Heinrich I. und Otto der Große. Neubeginn auf karolingischem Erbe*, 3rd edn. (Göttingen: Muster-Schmidt, 2006); G. Althoff and K. Schmid, *Amicitiae und pacta. Bündnis, Einung, Politik und Gebetsgedenken im beginnenden 10. Jahrhundert* (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1992). The concept of the *Reichskirchensystem* has become largely obsolete since T. Reuter, ‘The “Imperial Church System” of the Ottonian and Salian Rulers: a Reconsideration’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 33 (1982): 347–74; repr. in T. Reuter, *Medieval Politics and Modern Mentalities*, ed. J.L. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 325–54.

⁴ H. Keller, ‘Zum Charakter der “Staatlichkeit” zwischen karolingischer Reichsreform und hochmittelalterlichen Herrschaftsausbau’, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 23 (1989): 248–64; G. Althoff, *Spielregeln der Politik im Mittelalter: Kommunikation in Frieden und Fehde* (Darmstadt: Primus, 1997). For a recent argument against this characterisation, see D.S. Bachrach, *Warfare in Tenth-Century Germany* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2012).

Ottonian rule in ideologically-charged narrative histories.⁵ Historians have thus tended to focus on the Ottonians' obvious political and military superiority. Much less, however, has been said about responses to Ottonian rule, or what we might consider the dynasty's 'soft power': was their overlordship always forcibly imposed and grudgingly endured, or could it potentially confer benefits which might render it more palatable to new subjects?

This study considers the notion of Ottonian hegemony from a West Frankish perspective, namely that of the powerful church of Rheims. West Francia provides an especially useful case for examining the question of dynasty-building, for it was still ruled intermittently by kings from the Carolingian family, who had controlled an empire of their own until 888. The western kingdom was subject to Otto's influence for virtually the entirety of his reign. Otto repeatedly intervened in West Frankish affairs in the 940s and 950s. In particular, he oversaw the resolution of a long-running struggle for control of the archbishopric of Rheims. In the wake of this settlement, the Rheims canon Flodoard (893/4–966) composed his *Historia Remensis ecclesiae*, one of the great narratives of the tenth century.⁶ This work is a substantial institutional history, recounting Rheims' illustrious past from its Roman origins up to Flodoard's own day through the lives of the church's successive bishops and archbishops. It has been considered an exemplar of the *gesta* historiographical form.⁷ Because of its predominantly local orientation, however, the *Historia* has seldom been examined as evidence for contemporary reactions to Ottonian primacy. This article argues

⁵ For instance, P. Buc, 'Italian Hussies and German Matrons: Liutprand of Cremona on Dynastic Legitimacy', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 29 (1995): 207–25; H. Mayr-Harting, 'Liutprand of Cremona's Account of his Legation to Constantinople (968) and Ottonian Imperial Strategy', *English Historical Review* 116 (2001): 539–56; S. Robbie, 'Can Silence Speak Volumes? Widukind's *Res Gestae Saxonicae* and the Coronation of Otto I Reconsidered', *Early Medieval Europe* 20 (2012): 333–62.

⁶ *HRE*.

⁷ M. Sot, *Un historien et son église au Xe siècle: Flodoard de Reims* (Paris: Fayard, 1993). On *gesta* in general, see idem, *Gesta episcoporum, gesta abbatum*. Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental 37 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1981); and more recently T. Riches, 'The Changing Political Horizons of *Gesta episcoporum* from the Ninth to Eleventh Centuries', in *Patterns of Episcopal Power: Bishops in Tenth and Eleventh Century Western Europe*, eds. L. Körntgen and D. Waßenhoven (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 51–62. Stratmann, introduction to *HRE*, 1–48, provides a fundamental overview of the work.

that Flodoard – who had several links with Otto and his court – offers an important and underappreciated angle on the growth of Ottonian power. Specifically, it sheds light on Flodoard’s attitude by examining his oddly laconic account of a property dispute between the church of Rheims and one of Otto’s most powerful magnates, Conrad the Red, duke of Lotharingia. Flodoard, as he tells us in the *Historia*, was one of Rheims’ intercessors in a hearing of this dispute by Otto in Aachen. The disagreement concerned the monastery of Kusel (situated in Otto’s kingdom, roughly halfway between Trier and Worms) and its extensive lands just to the south in and around the Vosges massif. Otto refused to endorse Rheims’ claims. However, a year later, in 952, the king issued a diploma confirming the rights of the Rheims monastery of Saint-Rémi over the contested lands. What prompted this change of heart?

Earlier in 952, during Easter, Conrad the Red had visited Otto’s court at Magdeburg. As part of Otto’s attempts to master Italy, Conrad had been tasked with bringing the Italian ruler Berengar II to heel. Conrad struck some kind of deal with Berengar (probably one which would allow him to remain king), and the latter agreed to accompany the former to Otto’s court. One of our two main sources for the meeting says that Otto made Berengar wait three days before granting him an audience, thus greatly offending Conrad. The other says that Otto simply rejected the agreement Conrad had made with Berengar. Both agree, however, on the outcome: Conrad was deeply humiliated by the king’s treatment of him, and the seeds of rebellion had been sown.⁸ Within a year, Conrad was in open revolt against Otto.

In his *Historia*, Flodoard indirectly reveals that Kusel was part of Conrad’s familial patrimony, and this article suggests that Otto’s award of the land to Rheims amounted to a confiscation made in connection with Conrad’s fall from grace earlier in 952. This further

⁸ Respectively, the two sources, discussed below, are Widukind of Corvey, *Res gestae Saxonicae*, eds. P. Hirsch and H.-E. Lohmann. MGH *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum* 60 (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1935), 109–10 (III.10); and Adalbert of Magdeburg, *Continuatio Reginonis*, ed. F. Kurze. MGH *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum* 50 (Hanover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1890), 165–6 (*s.a.* 952).

dishonour was to be one of the factors which drove Conrad into rebellion in 953. The Kusel episode thus demonstrates one of the means by which Otto sought to control his magnates, as well as the potentially dire consequences of such actions. The affair also tells us something about contemporary responses to the rise of the Ottonians, for Flodoard completed his *Historia* in 952 – that is, in the midst of the escalating crisis between Conrad and Otto. Upon close inspection, we can see that Flodoard tells us a great deal about Kusel and the disputed territory. In fact, he allows us to trace the history of the monastery's association with his church all the way back to the time of Rheims' patron saint, Bishop Remigius (d. 533). In the ninth and tenth centuries, Rémois writers habitually invoked St Remigius as the guarantor of their church's property rights. But Flodoard's puzzling silence on several key aspects of the dispute reveals much more about his intentions in composing the *Historia*. By examining Flodoard's own Ottonian connections and several neglected features of his work, the *Historia* can be seen not simply as a 'local' text, and that Flodoard's writing reflected Rheims' deep entanglement in the new Ottonian hegemony by 950. This is evident not only in the fact that the church's property lay at the centre of an Ottonian political contest, but also in Flodoard's invocation of St Remigius and a mythical pan-Frankish past as the historical horizon for his church's property claims. For Rheims, the Ottonians offered practical protection of ecclesiastical property, as well as the prospect of a restoration of the diocese to a pre-eminent position in the Frankish world, both of which were keenly sought in the wake of the damaging archiepiscopal controversy that engulfed the church between 925 and 948. Flodoard thus may be read as an Ottonian 'court historian' by proxy, for he increasingly came to anticipate (and perhaps even hope for) Otto's hegemonial position. The Kusel episode, properly contextualised, reveals something of why elites and institutions in the new Ottonian sphere of influence might actively seek to align themselves with the new dynasty.

The article begins by outlining the extent of Otto's involvement in the West Frankish kingdom and Flodoard's links with the Ottonian court. It then turns to Kusel itself, examining what we know about the dispute and what Flodoard tells us about the land more generally in the *Historia*. The paper then investigates the circumstances of Conrad the Red's disgrace in more detail in order to resolve some of the puzzles presented by the Kusel affair. The study concludes by reconsidering Flodoard's intentions in composing the *Historia* and assessing the church of Rheims' position vis-à-vis Ottonian domination in the years around 950.

Otto and the West Frankish kingdom

Otto's forays into West Frankish politics stem largely from the struggle between the western and eastern kingdoms for control of the duchy (and former kingdom) of Lotharingia, a region of great political, economic and cultural significance comprising the lands between the Meuse and the Rhine. Mastery of Lotharingia was a pivotal issue in post-Carolingian dynastic politics.⁹ Following the disintegration of Charles the Fat's empire in 888, Lotharingia remained under eastern control until 911, when the region's magnates committed themselves to the West Frankish king Charles the Simple. However, in 925, the Lotharingians switched their allegiance back to the eastern ruler Henry (Otto's father). Shortly after Otto succeeded to the throne in 936, the Lotharingians rebelled. Louis IV, the son of Charles the Simple who also became king in 936, launched his own invasion, sensing an opportunity to expand his kingdom and reclaim the territory once controlled by his father. Otto overcame the rebels and Louis was repulsed, although he did manage to gain the hand of Otto's sister Gerberga in marriage. Louis continued to harbour Lotharingian designs – as demonstrated by pointedly

⁹ B. Schneidmüller, 'Französische Lothringenpolitik im 10. Jahrhundert', *Jahrbuch für Westdeutsche Landesgeschichte* 5 (1979): 1–31. The history of Lotharingia is rehearsed succinctly in S. MacLean, 'Shadow Kingdom: Lotharingia and the Frankish World, c.850–c.1050', *History Compass* 11, no. 6 (2013): 443–57.

naming his and Gerberga's son Lothar in 941 – but Otto's suppression of the revolt confirmed Saxon dominance of the region and signalled the beginning of his ascendancy.

The marriage in 938 of another of Otto's sisters to Hugh the Great, *dux Francorum* and count of Paris and Tours, meant that the king was brother-in-law both to the West Frankish monarch and to the most powerful West Frankish magnate. Louis and Hugh had history. Louis, a Carolingian, had been brought over to become king by Hugh from England, where he had been residing in exile since the deposition of his father, Charles, in 923. Hugh's own father, Robert of Neustria, played a major role in that deposition, having been elevated to the throne in 922 in a widespread rebellion against Charles. Robert, however, died when the two met in battle in 923.¹⁰ Louis endured a torrid time in the early 940s, during which his effective authority was severely curtailed by Hugh and other magnates who were backed by Otto in the wake of Louis' abortive Lotharingian campaign.¹¹ As Louis' prospects of regaining Lotharingia dwindled, Otto was increasingly able to act as mediator between his two brothers-in-law. In 945, Hugh took Louis prisoner – probably seeking to depose him – but was eventually forced to release the king after Gerberga pleaded for assistance from her brother. With Otto's support, Louis was able to assert himself, taking control of the vital political centre of Rheims in 946, where he restored his chancellor Artold to the archiepiscopal seat.

The see of Rheims was the subject of a simultaneous contest in which Artold and a rival bishop, Hugh of Vermandois (Hugh the Great's nephew), were vying for control of the episcopal seat. In 925, Count Heribert II of Vermandois appointed his son Hugh, then not even five years old, to the archbishopric, and assumed control of the church's properties for himself. The Vermandois faction was ousted in 931, and Artold, a monk from Saint-Rémi,

¹⁰ The standard treatment of Charles and Robert is now G. Koziol, *The Politics of Memory and Identity in Carolingian Royal Diplomas: the West Frankish Kingdom (840–987)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 401–533.

¹¹ The basic study of Louis remains P. Lauer, *Le règne de Louis IV d'Outre-Mer* (Paris: É. Bouillon, 1900).

was made archbishop under the auspices of King Raoul (r. 923–36). Artold himself was deposed in 940, and Hugh was reinstated until he was again ejected following Louis' recapture of Rheims in 946. Since Hugh of Vermandois' claims were supported by Hugh the Great, and Artold's by Louis, the Rheims schism was intrinsically linked with the wider political turmoil.¹² Otto sought to put an end to these twin disputes in 948 by convening a synod at his palace in Ingelheim, near Mainz. With Otto, Louis, a papal legate and over thirty (mostly Lotharingian) bishops in attendance, the council recognised the legitimacy of Artold and excommunicated Hugh of Vermandois. Otto also ordered Conrad the Red – his commander in the duchy of Lotharingia since 945 – to lead an army back into West Francia with Louis in order to subdue Hugh the Great. The resolution of these West Frankish quarrels across the border in Otto's kingdom through his agency was thus a powerful display of western subservience to Ottonian might. Louis died in 954, but the final years of his reign, marked by relative internal harmony and productive co-operation with Otto, were by far his most fruitful.

Flodoard's Ottonian connections

We know a great deal about the Rheims archiepiscopal dispute because Flodoard, our best source for West Frankish history in this period, was personally caught up in it.¹³ As he tells us, he was punished in both 925 and 940 for refusing to recognise the election and subsequent re-installation of Hugh of Vermandois.¹⁴ Nevertheless, Flodoard remained a prominent

¹² For a good account of the Rheims dispute, see J. Glenn, *Politics and History in the Tenth Century: the Work and World of Richer of Reims* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 215–34; and more broadly, R. McKitterick, 'The Carolingian Kings and the See of Rheims, 882–987', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J.M. Wallace-Hadrill*, eds. P. Wormald, D.A. Bullough and R. Collins (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 228–49.

¹³ In addition to the *Historia*, Flodoard also wrote an important set of annals and an epic verse history of the martyrs, saints and popes: Flodoard, *Annales*; Flodoard, *De triumphis Christi*, ed. J.-P. Migne. *Patrologiae cursus completus*, series Latina 135 (Paris: Migne, 1853), cols. 491–885. The standard studies of Flodoard are P.C. Jacobsen, *Flodoard von Reims: sein Leben und seine Dichtung 'De triumphis Christi'* (Leiden: Brill, 1978); and Sot, *Un historien*.

¹⁴ *HRE*, 412 (IV.20); 420 (IV.28).

member of the Rheims hierarchy, and he often accompanied his archbishops and the royal court on their travels, including on several occasions across the Rhine. In 944, he embarked on a royal delegation to Otto.¹⁵ In 948, he travelled to the synod of Ingelheim in June, as well as to a subsequent synod a few months later in Trier.¹⁶ And as we shall see shortly, he personally met with Otto in Aachen in 951 to discuss the Kusel situation while part of an embassy sent by Louis.¹⁷ Flodoard also wrote that Otto, with Artold's permission, had overseen the translation of some relics of St Timothy from Rheims to Magdeburg for a new royal monastery, and that its first abbot, Anno, later told him (*mihi retulit*) of the many miracles which had occurred there.¹⁸ Anno, described by Flodoard as 'then abbot, now bishop' (*tunc abbas, nunc episcopus*), became bishop of Worms in 950; we might therefore surmise that the historian met him on his journey to Aachen in 951. The monastery, dedicated to St Maurice, was soon richly endowed, and in 968 was made a cathedral, the focus of Otto's new archdiocese of Magdeburg.¹⁹

After the Ingelheim summit, while Louis and Conrad the Red headed off to West Francia to deal with Hugh the Great, Flodoard and Artold stayed with Archbishop Robert of Trier for a month.²⁰ Flodoard was closely acquainted with Robert. They had met at the latest by 946, when Robert was in Rheims with Otto to re-ordain Artold following Hugh of Vermandois' expulsion.²¹ At some point, Flodoard sent Robert a copy of his verse history *De triumphis Christi*. A seventeenth-century description of the now lost manuscript indicates that it was prefaced by a dedicatory letter which both asserted that Robert had requested the work and referred to previous correspondence between the two, Robert having apparently asked

¹⁵ Flodoard, *Annales*, 92–3 (*s.a.* 944) see Jacobsen, *Flodoard*, 47–8.

¹⁶ *HRE*, 428–38 (IV.35–7).

¹⁷ *HRE*, 111–12 (I.20).

¹⁸ *HRE*, 71 (I.4); see Sot, *Un historien*, 81, 369. The monastery was founded in 937.

¹⁹ Reuter, *Germany*, 163–5.

²⁰ *HRE*, 436 (IV.35).

²¹ Flodoard, *Annales*, 103 (*s.a.* 946); *HRE*, 425 (IV.33).

Flodoard to send him some literature.²² Robert was one of the few individuals upon whom Flodoard occasionally bestowed the reverential title *domnus*.²³ Furthermore, all surviving manuscripts of the *Historia Remensis ecclesiae* are dedicated to a *presul R.*, the identity of whom is agreed to have been Robert.²⁴ Robert himself was one of Otto's chief counsellors, holding the position of archchaplain in Lotharingia, taking charge of military forces for the king in the late 940s, and receiving numerous privileges and confirmations, as demonstrated in surviving diplomas.²⁵ It has also been shown that Robert sought to manage the settlement of the Rheims dispute himself in order to advance the see of Trier's claims to episcopal leadership of the Ottonian kingdom (ahead of those of the archbishopric of Mainz).²⁶

Additionally, Flodoard had contact with the controversial scholar and bishop Rather of Verona.²⁷ This is only known from an off-hand reference by Folcuin of Lobbes in his *Gesta abbatum Laubiensium* (c.980) that Rather had written a letter to Flodoard, a copy of which Folcuin had seen in the library at Lobbes.²⁸ Rather was also connected with the Ottonian court for a time: he too exchanged letters with Robert of Trier, and he received hospitality from Brun, Otto's influential brother, whom the king had appointed to both the archbishopric of Cologne and the dukedom of Lotharingia in 953. Brun installed Rather as bishop of Liège in 953, but he was ejected just two years later. Nevertheless, Flodoard's acquaintance with numerous Ottonian bishops, as well as his service both to the church of

²² P. Lehmann, 'Nachrichten von der alten Trierer Dombibliothek', in idem, *Erforschung des Mittelalters* I, 2nd edn. (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1959), 231–53 (245–6); Jacobsen, *Flodoard*, 63–4.

²³ On Flodoard's careful use of titles, see P.C. Jacobsen, 'Die Titel *princeps* und *domnus* bei Flodoard von Reims', *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 13 (1978): 50–72, with reference to Robert at 67–8.

²⁴ *HRE*, preface, 57; see Jacobsen, *Flodoard*, 52–3; Sot, *Un historien*, 101–3.

²⁵ J. Nightingale, *Monasteries and Patrons in the Gorze Reform: Lotharingia, c.850–1000* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 232–3.

²⁶ E.-D. Hehl, 'Erzbischof Ruotbert von Trier und der Reimser Streit', in *Deus qui mutat tempora: Menschen und Institutionen im Wandel des Mittelalters. Festschrift für Alfons Becker*, eds. E.-D. Hehl, H. Siebert and F. Staab (Sigmaringen: J. Thorbecke, 1987), 55–68.

²⁷ On Rather's extraordinary career, see P.L.D. Reid, ed. and trans., *The Complete Works of Rather of Verona* (Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1991), 3–16.

²⁸ Folcuin of Lobbes, *Gesta abbatum Laubiensium*, in *Annales, chronica et historiae aevi Carolini et Saxonici*, ed. G.H. Pertz. MGH *Scriptores* in folio 4 (Hanover: MGH, 1841), 64 (c. 20). Rather was originally a monk at Lobbes and returned there at various points in his career. The letter was probably written around 940. Rather also delivered a sermon at Rheims in 944 or 945: Reid, ed., *Complete Works*, 218–22.

Rheims and to Louis, show that he did have access to Otto's court, and this should be borne in mind as we consider his *Historia* in more detail.

The dispute over Kusel

In his *Historia*, Flodoard often referred to his church's property *in Vosago* ('in the Vosges'), even when he knew the land in question was in fact Kusel. From his *Historia* and a handful of diplomas invoking similar terminology, however, we know that 'the Vosges' included Kusel and neighbouring Altenglan (which today constitute an area in southern Rhineland-Palatinate known, not coincidentally, as the Remigiusland or Remigiusberg), as well as Behren-lès-Forbach and Bischmisheim (in the Saarland, about 50 kilometres south-west of Kusel).²⁹ These latter two places were named in an 884 diploma of Charles the Fat for Rheims as being *villae* 'in the *pagus* of Rosselgau, in the county of Bliesgau' (*in pago Roslinse in comitatu Blesinse*).³⁰ This expression, as we shall see momentarily, was always invoked in tenth-century diplomas to describe lands belonging to Kusel, suggesting that Behren-lès-Forbach and Bischmisheim were *villae* of the monastery. But when Flodoard makes reference to 'the Vosges', it is not always obvious where he means.

[Printer: please place Figure 1 near the following paragraph. Caption follows.]

Figure 1. Key locations in the text. Source: Author.

In terms of political geography, this area lay around the eastern fringes of Lotharingia. Kusel itself was not located in Lotharingia – it was within the archdiocese of Mainz, which

²⁹ For references in Flodoard and in diplomas to these identified places, see below.

³⁰ P. Kehr, ed., *Die Urkunden der deutschen Karolinger*. Zweiter Band: *Die Urkunden Karls III*. MGH *Diplomatum regum Germaniae ex stirpe Karolinorum* 2 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1937), 170–1 (no. 106). On the terms *pagus* and *comitatus* in this period, see C. West, *Reframing the Feudal Revolution: Political and Social Transformation Between Marne and Moselle, c.800–c.1100* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 139–45.

was in the East Frankish kingdom proper – but many of its lands to the south were, as they lay in the diocese of Metz, part of the Lotharingian province of Trier.³¹ This region had been hotly contested since the later Merovingian period, when numerous kin-groups had sought to dominate the Vosges.³² Situated between the Moselle and Rhine valleys, the Vosges was a relatively fertile upland plateau, a major centre of mining, and home to a number of monasteries.³³ The district's wider political and strategic value is demonstrated by an unusually rich quantity of surviving documentation from the Carolingian period, suggesting that control of the area was keenly contested. This competition was especially pronounced in the decade following 888, when two local factions (who had been rivals for a considerable time beforehand) became embroiled in a violent and bloody feud as they vied for control of the Vosges sub-region in an attempt to exercise wider control over Lotharingia and gain access to the regnal political stage.³⁴ Although Lotharingia was under East Frankish control after 925, long-standing local political rivalries and the presence of potential points of royal patronage to both the east and west meant that the Vosges remained a volatile and hotly contested area throughout the tenth century.

What did Flodoard say about 'the Vosges' and the activities of Conrad the Red's family there? It is only from the historian's testimony that we know that there was any friction at all between Conrad and Rheims over the lands. In the first book of his *Historia*, in a chapter about the miracles of St Remigius, Flodoard states that Archbishop Artold had entrusted certain 'properties in the Vosges' (*res in Vosago*) to Conrad, who in turn gave these *res* to one of his men, a certain Ragembald. Ragembald then oppressed the *coloni* and

³¹ For Kusel lying within the province of Mainz, see *HRE*, 406 (IV.13); and for the lands in the bishopric of Metz, 316 (III.23); both discussed below. See also the maps of these districts in H. Hummer, *Politics and Power in Early Medieval Europe: Alsace and the Frankish Realm, 600–1000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 15–16.

³² As studied in Hummer, *Politics and Power*.

³³ A. Stoclet, *Autour de Fulrad de Saint-Denis (v.710–784)* (Geneva: Droz, 1993), 157–66; M. Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: the Middle Rhine Valley, 400–1000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1–2; Hummer, *Politics and Power*, 12–14.

³⁴ Innes, *State and Society*, 222–33.

plundered the land. The afflicted locals complained and often came to Rheims in order to invoke the protection of St Remigius (to whom the *ecclesia* of Kusel was consecrated). Then, in a rare autobiographical digression, Flodoard wrote that, ‘Just last year, I spoke with King Otto and the aforementioned duke [Conrad] about this matter when I was sent to Aachen to that same king, but I could not get Ragembald’s plundering of these lands to stop.’³⁵ This ‘last year’ was 951.³⁶ Shortly thereafter, according to Flodoard, Ragembald gathered the peasants and put them to work on a Sunday. That evening, just before Vespers, he was suddenly struck by an invisible assailant. He asked the workers who had hit him, but they all denied having seen anything. He then flew into a rage and lost his mind, never to recover from his insanity, and soon died. When Conrad caught wind of what had befallen Ragembald, he became terrified, and immediately came to the monastery of Saint-Rémi in Rheims, where he returned the land to Artold, who then assigned it to Hincmar, the abbot of Saint-Rémi, and his monks.³⁷

Flodoard does not tell us that the specific land in question was Kusel, but this is confirmed elsewhere, most notably in a diploma of Otto. Issued at Bothfeld (Hanover) on 9 September 952, the diploma confirms a grant by Artold to Saint-Rémi of the *abbatia* of Kusel and its adjoining lands in the Vosges and in the *pagus* of Rosselgau, in the county of Bliesgau. It states that Artold restored the land to Saint-Rémi and sent Abbot Hincmar, who beseeched the king to confirm the grant. This was then done, notably, at the petition of Conrad, who was apparently also present. The diploma asserts that these lands had first been

³⁵ *HRE*, 111–12 (I.20): ‘Pro qua re nuper anno preterito cum rege Ottone et prefato duce locuti sumus, quando Aquis ad eundem regem missi fuimus, sed, ut idem Ragembaldus ab ipsarum rerum direptione desisteret, impetrare nequivimus.’

³⁶ Louis, then at peace with Hugh the Great, sent a delegation headed by Hugh to Otto at Aachen around Easter 951. In his annal for the year, Flodoard notes that Conrad was also present and describes the embassy in unusually close detail, thus strongly suggesting his presence and rendering this the date of the dispute hearing: Flodoard, *Annales*, 130–1 (*s.a.* 951); Jacobsen, *Flodoard*, 73–4, with n. 4; Sot, *Un historien*, 49, 683.

³⁷ *HRE*, 112 (I.20). The archbishops of Rheims had been abbots of Saint-Rémi until it was reformed in 945 (*HRE*, 424 (IV.32)), although even after it was removed from episcopal administration, archbishops such as Artold continued to take a leading role in Saint-Rémi’s affairs.

given to Remigius by Clovis' son Clodomir.³⁸ Just a few months after receiving Otto's confirmation, Saint-Rémi obtained another diploma concerning these possessions, this time from Louis IV. On 27 March 953, at Hincmar's request, Louis confirmed a privilege of immunity for the *villae* of Crugny and Bazancourt (both in the vicinity of Rheims), as well as for the *villa* of Kusel, with its adjacent estates in the Vosges and in the *pagus* of Rosselgau, in the county of Bliesgau.³⁹ On 1 January 955, Hincmar obtained a further confirmation of the Vosges lands from Louis' son and successor Lothar.⁴⁰ Saint-Rémi also received a joint confirmation from Otto I and Otto II in 965, as well as further diplomas from Otto III in 986 and Hugh Capet in 992, and continued to enjoy privileges in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁴¹ So, from the evidence of Flodoard's first-hand account and a healthy batch of

³⁸ *DO I*, 237–8 (no. 156): ‘... Noverit omnium fidelium nostrorum presentium scilicet et futurorum industria, quod Artoldus Remorum archiepiscopus reddens ad ecclesiam beati Remigii quandam abbatiam nomine Coslam intra fines regni nostri sitam, misit ad nostrae presentiae clementiam Hincmarum cenobii eiusdem beati Remigii abbatem, petens nostramque celsitudinem deprecans ut quoniam terra ipsa imperii nostri ditione clauditur, nostrae auctoritatis precepto concessionem ipsius episcopi confirmare deberemus. Cuius legationi clementer annuentes et benignam super hac re Chonradi ducis nostri petitionem suscipientes pro animae nostrae remedio supranominatam Coslae abbatiam monachis sacro loco sub regula sancti Benedicti deservientibus cum omni scilicet integritate, villis terris locis silvis et omnibus adiacentibus reddidimus, quicquid scilicet intra Vosagum ac in pago Roslinse in comitatu Blisinse ad ipsam abbatiam pertinere videtur, sicut ipsi videlicet beatissimo adhuc superstiti Remigio a Clodmiro rege, primi Francorum regis Chlodouei filio, aliisque Francorum regibus, nostris sane antecessoribus, traditum fore dinoscitur, decreto nostrae regiae auctoritatis renovamus et redditum esse confirmamus ...’. See also J.F. Böhmer and E. von Ottenthal, eds., *Regesta Imperii II. Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter den Herrschern aus dem Saechsischen Hause, 919–1024* (Innsbruck: Verlag der Wagner'schen Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1893), 102 (II.1, no. 219). The original parchment was extant in Stuttgart until it was destroyed during the Second World War. A facsimile copy survives: Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart, Rep. A 81, Privilegien und Freiheiten Bü. 1. See also the diploma's entry in the *Württembergisches Urkundenbuch* (vol. XII, no. 5728), available online: <http://www.wubonline.de/?wub=288> (Accessed 22 December 2015).

³⁹ P. Lauer, ed., *Recueil des actes de Louis IV, roi de France (936–954)* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1914), 98–100 (no. 44): ‘... Cosla, cum omnibus intra Vosagum atque in pago Roslinse, in comitatu Blisinse, integre ad eam pertinentibus ...’. Note that Lauer mistakes *Cosla* for Coole (Marne, south of Châlons-en-Champagne). The diploma survives in the original: Archives départementales de la Marne, dépôt annexe à la Bibliothèque de Reims, fonds de Saint-Rémy, liasse 15, no. 1. A facsimile can be found in F. Lot and P. Lauer, eds., *Diplomata Karolinorum. Recueil de reproductions en fac-similé des actes originaux des souverains carolingiens conservés dans les archives et bibliothèques de France*, vol. 8 (Toulouse: É. Privat, 1945), plate X, available online: <http://www.mgh.de/bibliothek/virtueller-lesesaal/ddkar/08/?p=X> (Accessed 22 December 2015).

⁴⁰ L. Halphen and F. Lot, eds., *Recueil des actes de Lothaire et de Louis V, rois de France (954–986)* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1908), 8–10 (no. 4).

⁴¹ *DO I*, 400–1 (no. 286), (cf. *Regesta Imperii* II.1, no. 385); T. Sickel, ed., *Die Urkunden Otto des II*, MGH Diplomatum regum et imperatorum Germaniae 2.1 (Hanover: Hahn, 1888), 18–19 (no. 11), (cf. *Regesta Imperii* II.2, no. 586); T. Sickel, ed., *Die Urkunden Otto des III*, MGH Diplomatum regum et imperatorum Germaniae 2.2 (Hanover: Hahn, 1893), 427–8 (no. 28), (cf. *Regesta Imperii* II.3, no. 985: the extant copy of Otto III's charter refers to *Cella*, but from the context *Cosla* is plainly meant). For Hugh Capet, see P. Varin, ed., *Archives administratives de la ville de Reims. Collection de pièces inédites pouvant servir à l'histoire des institutions dans l'intérieur de la cité*, I, (Paris: Impr. de Crapelet, 1839), 176–8. For later privileges, see F. Poirier-

royal charters, we are relatively well informed about Kusel's affiliation with the monastery of Saint-Rémi from the mid-tenth century onwards.

In his *Historia*, Flodoard tells us much more about his church's possessions in the Vosges. In fact, within this text we can essentially read a history of the area from the time of St Remigius. The four-book *Historia* is a boon for modern historians, as Flodoard reproduced and summarised a wealth of documentary material from the Rheims cathedral archives, including diplomas, letters, wills, synodal acts, inscriptions and more, the majority of which would otherwise be lost.⁴² In Book 1, Flodoard included St Remigius' will.⁴³ The version preserved by Flodoard is not genuine, and it is often considered to be either a creation of the great ninth-century archbishop Hincmar (845–82) or an interpolation by Rheims clerics in the 990s. However, it may in fact have been produced in the mid-tenth century, for it is not known prior to its inclusion in the *Historia*, and there is reason to believe that Flodoard himself was involved in the interpolation of the will.⁴⁴ In the will (as it is found in the *Historia*), Remigius left to his successors a number of properties in the Vosges. These consisted primarily of Kusel, Altenglan, Behren-lès-Forbach and Bischmisheim, which had been brought together from donations by Clovis and purchases by Remigius.⁴⁵ Flodoard says nothing about the grant from Clodomir mentioned in Otto's 952 diploma. He does, however, note a donation of land 'in the Vosges near the Saar river' (*in Vosago prope fluvium Saroam*)

Coutansais, *Les abbayes bénédictines du diocèse de Reims*. Gallia Monastica I (Paris: A. et J. Picard, 1974), 523.

⁴² H. Zimmermann, 'Zu Flodoards Historiographie und Regestentechnik', in *Festschrift für Helmut Beumann zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds. K.U. Jaschke and R. Wenskus (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1977), 200–14; M. Stratmann, 'Die *Historia Remensis Ecclesiae*: Flodoards Umgang mit seinen Quellen', *Filologia Mediolatina* 1 (1994): 111–27.

⁴³ *HRE*, 97–105 (I.18).

⁴⁴ E. Roberts, 'Flodoard, the Will of St Remigius and the See of Reims in the Tenth Century', *Early Medieval Europe* 22 (2014): 201–30, rehearsing the literature on the will at 203–8.

⁴⁵ *HRE*, 98 (I.18).

by Clovis' great-grandson Childebert II, during the episcopate of Egidius in the late sixth century, though this grant is known solely from Flodoard's passing reference.⁴⁶

The next we read of the Vosges is in the historian's copious summaries of the correspondence of Archbishop Hincmar.⁴⁷ According to Flodoard, Hincmar obtained restitution of Kusel and Altenglan (named individually and then described as *in saltu Vosago*) and other lands in the Wormsgau and Thuringia from Louis the German.⁴⁸ Hincmar wrote relatively prolifically about the Vosges lands, sending letters about them to Charles the Bald, the archbishop of Mainz (in whose province Kusel lay) and the bishop of Metz (in whose diocese lands belonging to Kusel were located).⁴⁹ Hincmar also wrote to Megincoz, a powerful count in the area, and Erluin, a local royal agent, both of whom the archbishop enlisted to defend Rheims' property interests.⁵⁰ Next, Flodoard reports that Hincmar's successor Fulk (883–900) obtained a confirmation of immunity for Behren-lès-Forbach from Pope Formosus in 892.⁵¹ A decade later, in 902, Fulk's successor Heriveus (900–22) personally travelled to the region, where he dedicated a church within St Remigius' *possessio* in the Vosges. Heriveus also reached an agreement with Archbishop Hatto of Mainz (891–913) over Rheims' rights in the area.⁵² We actually possess the documents used by Flodoard – the agreement between Heriveus and Hatto, and the former's verse dedication of the church

⁴⁶ *HRE*, 133 (II.2). Flodoard's reference to the Saar suggests this grant involved land in or around Behren-lès-Forbach and Bischmisheim.

⁴⁷ Flodoard preserves summaries of some 450 otherwise-unknown letters written by Hincmar; the *Historia* is thus one of the most important sources for the archbishop's career. For the full register, see H. Schrörs, *Hincmar, Erzbischof von Reims: sein Leben und seine Schriften* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1884), 518–88; and Sot, *Un historien*, 537–626.

⁴⁸ *HRE*, 210 (III.10); see also Hincmar's letter to Louis at 267 (III.20).

⁴⁹ *HRE*, 259 (III.18) (Charles); 272 (III.21) (Liutbert of Mainz); 316 (III.23) (Wala of Metz). In the letter to Liutbert, Hincmar related a story about a man named Giberus who had invaded Remigius' property in the Vosges and had subsequently gone mad and died.

⁵⁰ *HRE*, 340–1 (III.26).

⁵¹ *HRE*, 372 (IV.2).

⁵² *HRE*, 406 (IV.13). Otto's diploma of 952 speaks of an *abbatia* of Kusel, with monks serving there under the Rule of St Benedict. The *ecclesia* consecrated by Heriveus was probably a separate church in Kusel, though it is possible that it was refounded as a monastery at some point in the early tenth century.

– independent of his *Historia*, and these confirm that the land in question was in fact Kusel, though Flodoard did not specify this.⁵³

Finally – that is, chronologically, but in fact back in Book 1 of the *Historia* – Flodoard relates two further punitive miracle stories (in addition to the episode involving Ragembald) concerning individuals who interfered with the church’s lands in the Vosges. One, occurring at an unspecified date, involved a man who was blinded and whose arm became withered after he tried to tamper with the boundaries established by Remigius.⁵⁴ The other, notably, concerned Werner, count of the Nahegau, Wormsgau and Speyergau, and the father of Conrad the Red.⁵⁵ Werner had apparently received lands in the Vosges from the East Frankish king Conrad (r. 911–18). Flodoard was almost certainly referring to Kusel here, given that Kusel was in the Nahegau (the Nahe river runs within 15 kilometres of Kusel). Here, Remigius appeared in a dream to Archbishop Herigar of Mainz (913–27) and ordered him to tell King Conrad to instruct Werner to vacate the saint’s lands. When Herigar failed to act on this, Remigius beat him, and eventually the archbishop went to King Conrad, who had the land returned to the church of Rheims.⁵⁶

⁵³ These two short documents are extant in a single manuscript: Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 418. They are edited as F. Baethgen, ed., *Notitia de conventu Hattonis archiepiscopi Moguntini et Herivei archiepiscopi Remensis*. MGH Scriptores in folio 30:2 (Leipzig: Impensis Karoli W. Hiersemann, 1934), 755–6. R.-H. Bautier, ‘Un recueil de textes pour servir à la biographie de l’archevêque de Reims, Hervé (Xe siècle). Son attribution à Flodoard’, in *Mélanges d’histoire du moyen âge: dédiés à la mémoire de Louis Halphen*, ed. C.-E. Perrin (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1951), 1–6, argued that Flodoard had probably written this manuscript, but this has been doubted by G. Schmitz, ‘Das Konzil von Trosly (909): Überlieferung und Quellen’, *Deutsches Archiv* 33 (1977): 341–434 (350–1); and Jacobsen, *Flodoard*, 59–60, n. 15.

⁵⁴ *HRE*, 108 (I.20).

⁵⁵ On Werner, see W. Metz, ‘Miscellen zur Geschichte der Widonen und Salier, vornehmlich in Deutschland’, *Historisches Jahrbuch* 85 (1965): 1–27 (23); and Innes, *State and Society*, 235 with n. 240. Note that Werner, progenitor of the Salian dynasty, is caught up in the acrimonious debate about the genealogy of the Conradine family, for his wife (Conrad’s mother), ultimately unknown, may have been a relative of King Conrad I. Werner’s identity as Conrad’s father, however, is secure. Representative of the two sides of the debate are D.C. Jackman, *Criticism and Critique: Sidelights on the Konradiner* (Oxford: Unit for Prosopographical Research, 1997); and E. Hlawitschka, *Konradiner-Genealogie, unstatthafte Verwandtenehen und spätottonisch-frühsalische Thronbesetzungspraxis*. MGH Studien und Texte 32 (Hanover: Hahnsche, 2003). See also C. Settapani and J.-P. Poly, ‘Les Conradiens: un débat toujours ouvert’, *Francia* 23 (1996): 135–66.

⁵⁶ *HRE*, 111 (I.20). See also Sot, *Un historien*, 222–3, 399–400.

From Flodoard, then, we know a lot about the history of this area's association with Rheims. However, as Gerhard Schneider showed, the origin of Rheims' ownership is rather unclear. Beyond Flodoard's assertion that a *villa* in the Vosges was donated by Childebert II (a claim which has not been challenged), there is no secure basis for the church's rights prior to the time of Archbishop Hincmar, who gave a brief account of Remigius' activities there in his *Vita Remigii*, from which that of the saint's will (as it appears in Flodoard's *Historia*) seems to have been derived.⁵⁷ The contradictory accounts of the origins of Rheims' possession of Kusel between Flodoard (who attributes it, via the interpolated version of Remigius' will, to Clovis, or if one dismisses the will, then to a grant of Childebert II) and Otto's diploma (attributing it to Clodomir) cast further doubt on their genuineness.

The narrative Flodoard does *not* provide is also rather telling and may cast some light on why Rheims could have been seeking to augment the historicity of its claims. In the ninth century, Hincmar had been able to enlist advocates in the region, but these arrangements collapsed when Rheims' most influential agent Count Meginoz was assassinated in 892, plunging Lotharingia and its fringes into chaos.⁵⁸ The uncertainty brought about by this crisis could have been what compelled Fulk to seek a papal privilege for the *villa* of Behren-lès-Forbach, and Heriveus' journey to the area in 902 was plainly an attempt to reassert his church's rights once the political situation had slightly cooled down.⁵⁹ The fact that Heriveus, like Hincmar before him, sought the archbishop of Mainz's assistance suggests that Rheims'

⁵⁷ G. Schneider, 'Reims und das Remigiusland im frühen Mittelalter (6. bis 9. Jahrhundert)', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 119 (1971): 471–80 (473–4); Hincmar of Rheims, *Vita S. Remigii*, in *Passiones vitaeque sanctorum aevi Merovingici et antiquiorum aliquot (I)*, ed. B. Krusch. MGH Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum 3 (Hanover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1896), 309 (17). On the *Vita*, see now M.-C. Isaïa, *Remi de Reims: mémoire d'un saint, histoire d'une Église* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2010), 465–546.

⁵⁸ Regino of Prüm, *Chronicon*, ed. F. Kurze. MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum 50 (Hanover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1890), 140 (*s.a.* 892); see also Innes, *State and Society*, 225–9. Pope Formosus wrote to Fulk of Rheims to express his concern over the violent fallout from this episode: *HRE*, 375 (IV.3).

⁵⁹ For the confirmation (which was above all a papal privilege for Rheims as the West Frankish primate see), G. Schneider, *Erzbischof Fulco von Reims (883–900) und das Frankenreich* (Munich: Arbo-Gesellschaft, 1973), 193–4; and for Heriveus, G. Schmitz, 'Heriveus von Reims (900–922): zur Geschichte des Erzbistums Reims am Beginn des 10. Jahrhunderts', *Francia* 6 (1978): 59–106 (66–8).

ownership was precarious. Flodoard's comments and miracle accounts indicate that his church continued to struggle in the tenth century in the face of competing claims from the family of Werner and Conrad. Their patrimony included the wealthy abbey of Hornbach and other lands in the Vosges and along the western banks of the Rhine around Worms and Speyer. It should also be noted that Rheims' advocate Megingoz was murdered by a certain Alberich, a relative of Werner and Conrad.⁶⁰ Megingoz and Alberich belonged to the two factions then locked in a struggle for control of the wider region. In the mid-tenth century, Conrad too sought to construct a powerbase in these counties as a means of dominating Lotharingia. This, coupled with the evidence of Flodoard's narrative, suggests that both the controversy over these lands and the highly visible factional competition in the area *c.*900 were still live issues half a century later.

What did the church of Rheims hope to gain from owning land in this relatively remote area? In the late eighth century, Abbot Fulrad of Saint-Denis had obtained a number of properties in the Vosges, and in the Bliesgau in particular, suggesting that the land was profitable.⁶¹ If the tenth-century archbishops could enlist agents to protect their interests as Hincmar had done, then there was a real prospect of material benefit. It is likely that Flodoard and Artold (who, as Flodoard recalled, had entrusted the lands to Conrad at some point) were trying to recruit Conrad to their cause, but for reasons which ultimately remain somewhat obscure, they were unsuccessful (though it is probably significant that the advocate Megingoz was a rival of Werner's family). It may be the case that a tenth-century archbishop of Rheims had relatively little to offer a local authority in return for their assistance on location. In the ninth century, the prospect of royal patronage through Hincmar's connections to powerful

⁶⁰ Innes, *State and Society*, 213–15 (for Hornbach and Werner's local power), 227 (for Werner's relation to Alberich).

⁶¹ As shown by his extant testament of 777: Stoclet, *Autour de Fulrad*, 469–78. Interestingly, Hincmar spent his youth at Saint-Denis. As the basis of Rheims' Vosges claims prior to Hincmar's episcopate is so obscure, one wonders whether the archbishop had been alerted to the area's potential during his time at Saint-Denis.

kings made working on Rheims' behalf attractive.⁶² In the tenth century, however, when West Frankish royal influence was at a low ebb, a Rheims archbishop would have struggled to match the honours potentially available from the Ottonian court, the new fulcrum of power. But advertising such claims, as Flodoard did in his *Historia*, was also a means of building social and cultural capital. Owning property in the name of St Remigius was a means of reinforcing the prestige of the saint's cult, and Flodoard was particularly concerned to broadcast the lofty status of his church's Merovingian patron. Insisting on rights in distant places such as the Vosges was a way for the church of Rheims to build relationships with factions across the former Carolingian empire.⁶³ What is particularly striking about the present case is that even around 950 – that is, some 60 years after the empire's disappearance – the church of Rheims was still desperate to implicate itself in Lotharingian and Ottonian networks of patronage.

The fall of Conrad the Red

Like other regional magnates, Conrad was bound to the Ottonian dynasty through kinship, having married Otto's daughter Liutgard in 947.⁶⁴ As contemporary chroniclers and diplomas attest, Conrad soon became Otto's chief lieutenant.⁶⁵ As duke of Lotharingia, Conrad often intervened, usually at Otto's behest, in the political affairs of neighbouring West Francia.⁶⁶ As mentioned, he led an army dispatched by Otto in aid of Louis following the 948 synod of Ingelheim. Later that year, Conrad stood as godfather to one of Louis'

⁶² C. West, 'The Significance of the Carolingian Advocate', *Early Medieval Europe* 17 (2009): 186–206 (205).

⁶³ See further M. Innes, 'Practices of Property in the Carolingian Empire', in *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe: New Directions in Early Medieval Studies*, eds. J.R. Davis and M. McCormick (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 247–66.

⁶⁴ On Conrad, see W. Glocker, *Die Verwandten der Ottonen und ihre Bedeutung in der Politik* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1989), 101–19; R.E. Barth, *Der Herzog in Lotharingen im 10. Jahrhundert* (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1990), 105–29.

⁶⁵ Barth, *Der Herzog*, 105–29; Innes, *State and Society*, 235–6.

⁶⁶ Barth, *Der Herzog*, 111–15; Reuter, *Germany*, 167–8.

daughters.⁶⁷ In 949 and 950, Conrad brokered truces between Louis and Hugh the Great.⁶⁸ Flodoard's *Annales* are the main source for these activities, and it is also there that we learn of Conrad's initial struggles against 'the Lotharingians', Count Reginar III of Hainaut in particular.⁶⁹ During 952, however, amidst the growing mayhem in Lotharingia, Conrad ceased to be a mediator between Louis and Hugh, and Flodoard reported how Conrad and Hugh came to the Marne and besieged the *munitio* of Mareuil-sur-Ay, just south of Rheims near Épernay, which had been constructed by Count Ragenold of Roucy and *fideles* of Artold in 949.⁷⁰ Conrad and Hugh captured and destroyed the fortification, although Louis, Artold and Ragenold soon rebuilt it.⁷¹

What had changed? Flodoard, with his typical reticence, offers no explanation for Conrad's about-face. Prior to mentioning the siege of Mareuil, however, he does note that Otto had come to Pavia in 951, where he expelled King Berengar II and married Adelheid, the widow of Berengar's predecessor Lothar (d. 950) and daughter of King Rudolf II of Burgundy (d. 937). Otto sought to push on to Rome, but in early 952, when it became apparent he could not count on a friendly reception there, he returned north, leaving Conrad in charge at Pavia. According to Flodoard, Berengar then came to Conrad, who received him and conducted him to Otto's court, where Berengar was received amicably and allowed to return to Italy.⁷² However, the Ottonian historians Adalbert of Magdeburg and Widukind of Corvey provide more details about this episode, and in particular about Conrad's part in it. According to Adalbert, Berengar came to Otto in Saxony on Conrad's advice, but obtained nothing from him on account of the artifice of the king's brother, Duke Henry of Bavaria, and

⁶⁷ Flodoard, *Annales*, 115–16 (*s.a.* 948); *HRE*, 435–6 (IV.35).

⁶⁸ Flodoard, *Annales*, 123 (*s.a.* 949); 126–7 (*s.a.* 950).

⁶⁹ Flodoard, *Annales*, 130–1 (*s.a.* 951); 135–6 (*s.a.* 953); 137–8 (*s.a.* 954).

⁷⁰ Ragenold was a key ally of Louis and an important member of the royal court *c.*950: S. MacLean, 'Reform, Queenship and the End of the World in Tenth-Century France: Adso's "Letter on the Origin and Time of the Antichrist" Reconsidered', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 86 (2008): 645–75 (665–6).

⁷¹ Flodoard, *Annales*, 133–4 (*s.a.* 952); and for the *munitio*'s construction, 123–4 (*s.a.* 949).

⁷² Flodoard, *Annales*, 132 (*s.a.* 951); 133 (*s.a.* 952).

was lucky to have been allowed to return to Italy with his life. Conrad was deeply insulted, evidently by Otto's refusal to accept the terms of his agreement with Berengar, and consequently withdrew from the king's fidelity.⁷³ Widukind presents things slightly differently, reporting that Conrad took Berengar to the royal court, where the latter was received kindly at Easter (which Otto celebrated at Magdeburg) and agreed to submit publicly to the king at a later date. Conrad, however, was offended by the fact that Otto had made Berengar wait three days for the meeting. Believing Duke Henry to be responsible for this affront, Conrad joined forces with Liudolf, who likewise had felt insulted by Henry.⁷⁴ Although there are discrepancies in the two historians' accounts, they are nevertheless in agreement that Conrad had been humiliated by his treatment at the king's Easter court.⁷⁵ This public insult, moreover, helped push Conrad into rebellion alongside Liudolf in 953 in order to save face.⁷⁶

What has not hitherto been recognised, however, is that just a few months after this high-profile snub in Magdeburg, Otto issued the diploma confirming the monastery of Kusel and all its lands for Saint-Rémi of Rheims. As we have seen, Kusel was located within Conrad's familial power base. Although the diploma stated that Conrad was the petitioner of the grant, its timing – coming between Conrad's public humiliation and his rebellion – suggests that the lands may rather have been given at Otto's behest, and that this act was part of a wider divestiture of Conrad's holdings. Indeed, confiscation was a common tactic for Otto: at least 27 of the king's diplomas were grants of forfeited lands.⁷⁷ In fact, five of these

⁷³ Adalbert, *Continuatio*, 165–6 (s.a. 952).

⁷⁴ Widukind, *Res gestae*, 109–10 (III.10).

⁷⁵ For discussion of these different versions, see *Regesta Imperii* I.3.3, no. 2228; II.1, no. 211a, which notes the possibility that Flodoard – who does not register any embarrassment for Conrad – conflated the Magdeburg meeting with the later submission, which took place in Augsburg on 7 August.

⁷⁶ Reuter, *Germany*, 155; Innes, *State and Society*, 236. On the significance of Otto's handling of this episode, see G. Althoff, 'Das Bett des Königs in Magdeburg. Zu Thietmar II,28', in *Festschrift für Berent Schwineköper zu seinem siebzigsten Geburtstag*, eds. H.-M. Maurer and H. Patze (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1982), 141–53; cited here repr. in G. Althoff, *Inszenierte Herrschaft: Geschichtsschreibung und politisches Handeln im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2003), 211–29 (215–16).

⁷⁷ Leyser, *Rule and Conflict*, 36, n. 33, for the full list.

grants stemmed from a confiscation of property in the Vosges belonging to the disgraced Etichonid count Guntram, who had been found guilty of treason in Augsburg just a month before Otto issued his diploma for Saint-Rémi.⁷⁸ There was much precedent for this sort of action: in 794, Duke Tassilo III of Bavaria was famously forced to submit to Charlemagne and renounce his family's claims to all their allodial property in exchange for the king's mercy.⁷⁹ In the ninth century, the fall of a powerful aristocrat often threw up questions about his proprietary acquisitions and provided an ideal occasion for competing parties to move on their own claims.⁸⁰ This could explain why Rheims chose to activate its ostensibly long-held rights at precisely this time. Yet Otto's diplomas of confiscation often spoke openly of the crimes which warranted such action.⁸¹ If this was a confiscation, why did the king not say so? For one, Conrad at this point had not really committed any crime. We might consider the title accorded to Conrad in the diploma (simply *dux noster*), which seems plain, though it is not particularly unusual; Conrad was described as *dilectus* or *fidelissimus* as often as not.⁸² Given Conrad's position as the king's most powerful man, it may be that Otto curbed the abasement by not explicitly declaring the act to be a confiscation and by instead giving Conrad the opportunity to renounce the land himself. Granted, this is speculative; we do not know exactly how bad relations between the king and duke were at this stage, but all our evidence suggests that Conrad was on thin ice. Moreover, diplomas were performances, and although Otto's confirmation for Saint-Rémi describes the act being made at Conrad's petition, it was

⁷⁸ *DO I*, 236–7 (no. 155). The nature of Guntram's crimes are left unspecified. See Leyser, *Rule and Conflict*, 36–7; T. Zotz, 'König Otto I., Graf Guntram und Breisach', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 137 (1989): 64–77; Hummer, *Politics and Power*, 243–4.

⁷⁹ S. Airlie, 'Narratives of Triumph and Rituals of Submission: Charlemagne's Mastering of Bavaria', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th Series, 9 (1999): 93–119 (117–18); repr. in idem, *Power and its Problems in Carolingian Europe* (Farnham: Variorum, 2012), III.

⁸⁰ M. Innes, 'Archives, Documents and Landowners in Carolingian Francia', in *Documentary Culture and the Laity in the Early Middle Ages*, eds. W. Brown and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 152–88 (167, n. 45).

⁸¹ e.g. the *latrocinia et malefacta* of *DDO I*, 434–6 (nos. 320 and 321).

⁸² e.g. *DDO I*, 169–70 (no. 87) (*dilectus*); 221–2 (no. 141), (*fidelissimus*); see Barth, *Der Herzog*, 114–17.

nevertheless a clear ratification of the duke's subordination to the king.⁸³ It likely would have already been known to contemporaries that Conrad was conceding family territory. For Otto, surely wary of the military resources Conrad could muster, this could have been an attempt to soften the blow, to remind Conrad who was in charge but not drive him too far away.

Of course, Conrad *was* pushed into revolt: by Easter 953, he was spearheading a widespread rebellion alongside Otto's son Liudolf and Archbishop Frederick of Mainz.⁸⁴ The uprising of 953–4 ultimately failed, not least because Conrad's attempts to establish order in his own duchy were spectacularly unsuccessful. Although Conrad was eventually reconciled with the king, he was never restored to his position in Lotharingia. In light of all this, Conrad's surrender of Kusel was probably also one of the factors underlying the rebellion. Flodoard, we should recall, asserted that Conrad had been so frightened by St Remigius' punishment of Ragembald that he handed the property over to the church of Rheims. However, the coincidence of Otto's confirmation and Conrad's court embarrassment suggests that this was not the case. Conrad doubtless felt undermined, for Otto had stripped him of property in the very area from which he was trying to gain a footing in Lotharingia. It is also surely significant that Flodoard, after travelling to Aachen and discussing the matter with Conrad and Otto in 951, reported that his appeal had fallen on deaf ears. This striking reversal further indicates that the diploma was linked with Conrad's fall from grace.

Flodoard's *Historia* reconsidered

Why did Flodoard feel the need to relate his church's recovery of Kusel in miraculous terms and to remain silent on Conrad's humiliation? It is worth noting here that the *Historia Remensis ecclesiae* was very likely completed in late 952, that is, right in the midst of

⁸³ On the 'performative' nature of diplomas, see now Koziol, *Politics of Memory*, *passim*, but esp. 52–62.

⁸⁴ For a narrative of events, Reuter, *Germany*, 154–60.

Conrad's period of disgrace.⁸⁵ This means that the situation with Kusel would have been a current and rather delicate issue. We saw above that Conrad bore no ill feeling towards the church of Rheims until 952, when he abruptly came to Hugh the Great's aid in a siege against the Rheims fortress of Mareuil, as Flodoard related in his annal for the year.⁸⁶ Quite when this occurred cannot be determined, but, pointedly, Flodoard reported the incident immediately after his brief account of Conrad and Berengar's meeting with Otto at Easter; nothing else in the annal is dateable. When Flodoard finished his *Historia*, Conrad remained in charge of Lotharingia, and despite the troubles he was facing there, he nevertheless commanded a formidable army. Amidst the increasingly unstable political situation in nearby Lotharingia, Rheims would have been wary of incurring Conrad's ire. Indeed, Flodoard complained in his annal for 954 when Conrad marched into West Francia with a band of Hungarian mercenaries and proceeded to wreak havoc around Rheims and Laon.⁸⁷ A desire to placate Conrad would explain why Flodoard ignored Conrad's humiliation over the Berengar fiasco and then attributed the restitution of the monastery of Kusel to the intervention of St Remigius.

Of course, such an interpretation requires grounds for believing that Conrad or his associates would have been among the potential readership of Flodoard's *Historia*. As a

⁸⁵ There is no absolute date for the completion of the *Historia*. From Flodoard's comment about visiting Aachen to discuss Kusel in the *anno preterito*, which, as mentioned, must have been 951, *HRE*, 111–12 (I.20), we know that he was still working on the text in 952. Flodoard also mentions that he had a cousin who had been a monk of the local monastery of Saint-Basle and had recently (*dudum*) died while serving as a priest in the cathedral: *HRE*, 139 (II.3). This has been taken to mean that Flodoard's cousin was among those expelled from Saint-Basle when the monastery was reformed by Artold in 952: Jacobsen, *Flodoard*, 68, n. 10; for the reform, see Flodoard, *Annales*, 134 (*s.a.* 952). The lack of reference to Louis' death in September 954 appears to provide a *terminus ante quam*: Stratmann, introduction to *HRE*, 4; but the two above-mentioned dating clues indicate that the historian probably completed the work in 952. The fact that these come respectively in the first and second books of the four-book *Historia* does not necessarily mean that Flodoard had yet to compose the last two books: in his preface, the historian wrote that he had spent time correcting and editing the work. Here Flodoard also mentioned that his progress had been hindered by frigid temperatures, which may suggest that he had finished the work in or just after winter (*HRE*, preface, 57). A date of completion in late 952 or possibly early 953 is therefore probable.

⁸⁶ Flodoard, *Annales*, 133–4 (*s.a.* 952).

⁸⁷ Flodoard, *Annales*, 137–8 (*s.a.* 954); see also Adalbert, *Continuatio*, 168 (*s.a.* 954); Widukind, *Res gestae*, 117–18 (III.30).

monument of institutional history and a celebration of Rheims' fabled past, the *Historia*, in common with other *gesta*, is usually presumed to have been written for a local audience. This position has been articulated most clearly by Michel Sot, who masterfully demonstrated how Flodoard, through his narration of the deeds of Rheims' illustrious bishops, had provided a collective identity and memory for his Rémois contemporaries – a providential sequence of divine actions as reflected in the history of their locality.⁸⁸ The *Historia* was a call for the see to be restored to the greatness it had achieved under the leadership of Hincmar. For Sot, it was the pinnacle of the *gesta* form. Evaluating its reception is tricky, for the work's manuscript tradition is rather poor; nevertheless, the earliest surviving copies, from 1150–75, are indeed both from Rheims.⁸⁹ Yet while the text has an obvious local orientation and interest for the clergy and people of Rheims, present and future, there are good reasons to suspect that Flodoard wanted his work to be read more widely. For one, Flodoard was a very ambitious writer, as demonstrated by his prolific output: in addition to the *Historia* (which stretches to 400 pages in Martina Stratmann's 1998 edition for the MGH), his oeuvre included a set of annals spanning 47 years and an epic verse history of almost 20,000 lines. Flodoard dedicated the *Historia* to the Lotharingian archbishop Robert of Trier, another close adviser to Otto in the years around 950. In the dedication, Flodoard mentioned that the *Historia* had been encouraged and requested by Robert.⁹⁰ This remark has been read as a

⁸⁸ Sot, *Un historien, passim*, but esp. 629–749; as well as idem, *Gesta episcoporum*; idem, 'L'expérience visionnaire et sa fonction dans l'*Histoire de l'Église de Reims* de Flodoard', in *Haut moyen âge: culture, éducation et société: études offertes à Pierre Riché*, ed. M. Sot (Paris: Erasmé, 1990), 477–91; idem, 'Local and Institutional History (300–1000)', in *Historiography in the Middle Ages*, ed. D.M. Deliyannis (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 89–114. Similarly (and largely following Sot), E. Beddoe, 'Memory and Identity in Flodoard of Reims: His Use of the Roman past', in *Texts and Identities in the Early Middle Ages*, eds. R. Corradini and others (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), 61–9; M.E. Moore, 'Prologue: Teaching and Learning History in the School of Reims, c.800–950', in *Teaching and Learning in Northern Europe, 1000–1200*, eds. S.N. Vaughn and J. Rubenstein (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 18–49 (43–5). For nuanced comment on the nature of *gesta*, see also S. Vanderputten, "'Literate Memory" and Social Reassessment in Tenth-Century Monasticism', *Mediaevistik* 17 (2004): 65–94; K. Ugé, *Creating the Monastic Past in Medieval Flanders* (York: York Medieval Press 2005); T. Riches, 'The Function of the *Gesta Episcoporum* as Archive: Some Reflections on the *Codex sancti Gisleni* (MS Den Haag KB75 F15)', *Jaarboek voor Middeleeuwse Geschiedenis* 10 (2007): 7–46; idem, 'Changing Political Horizons'.

⁸⁹ For the manuscripts of the *Historia*, see Stratmann, introduction to *HRE*, 31–5.

⁹⁰ *HRE*, preface, 57.

topos: the statement of command, a courteous fiction intended to express gratitude and admiration.⁹¹ Flodoard's declaration, however, may have been more than literary flourish, for Robert had taken a keen interest in settling the Rheims schism in order to bolster his own position within the Ottonian episcopacy. Although no manuscript of the *Historia* is definitely known to have been at Trier, there is much to suggest that Flodoard sent a copy to Robert, just as he had earlier of the *De triumphis Christi*. The early eleventh-century *Libellus de rebus Trevirensibus* included a number of passages and sources transmitted by Flodoard's *Historia*.⁹² Robert likely did possess a copy of the work, while the notion that he requested a book which commemorated his resolution of a dispute over the premier West Frankish see is not at all far-fetched. Moreover, Flodoard found a readership elsewhere in Lotharingia: the *Historia* was known to both Folcuin of Lobbes and the author of the *Gesta episcoporum Cameracensium* (written c.1025).⁹³ It is therefore not outside the realm of possibility that Conrad, as duke of Lotharingia and a leading Ottonian courtier, could have become familiar with Flodoard's work.

Authorial ambition aside, there are other reasons to believe that Flodoard and his superiors anticipated and sought readers beyond Rheims. Ottonian patronage was a desideratum on several levels. First, the church of Rheims possessed a good deal of land in Otto's kingdom beyond that in the Vosges. For instance, Flodoard related how Archbishop Hincmar had received restitution from Louis the German of *Scavenheim* in the *pagus* of

⁹¹ G. Simon, 'Untersuchungen zur Topik der Widmungsbriefe mittelalterlicher Geschichtsschreiber bis zum Ende des 12. Jahrhunderts. Erster Teil', *Archiv für Diplomatik* 4 (1959): 52–119 (65–6); Jacobsen, *Flodoard*, 61; J. Lake, *Richer of Saint-Rémi: the Methods and Mentality of a Tenth-Century Historian* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2013), 38–9.

⁹² Jacobsen, *Flodoard*, 86; Stratmann, introduction to *HRE*, 43 (who was at a loss to explain the lack of a Trier exemplar of the *Historia*); O. Schneider, *Erzbischof Hinkmar und die Folgen: der vierhundertjährige Weg historischer Erinnerungsbilder von Reims nach Trier* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 109–15, 267.

⁹³ See Stratmann, introduction to *HRE*, 42–3. The *Historia* was also in Bamberg by the eleventh century, although it may be more sensible to attribute this transfer to the passing of Gerbert of Aurillac's personal library to the new cathedral: F. Heinzer, 'Fragmente eines unbekanntem Textzeugen von Flodoards *Historia Remensis Ecclesiae*', *Deutsches Archiv* 38 (1982): 551–4; Stratmann, introduction to *HRE*, 45; and on Gerbert's library, H. Hoffmann, *Bamberger Handschriften des 10. und des 11. Jahrhunderts*, *MGH Schriften* 39 (Hanover: Hahn, 1995), 22–30.

Worms, as well as lands ‘in Thuringia and in Austrasia’, including *Sconerunstat* and *Helisleba*.⁹⁴ Rheims also owned extensive property along the Meuse, part of which formed the frontier between the western and eastern kingdoms. Some of these lands, such as Mouzon, Douzy and Mézières, lay in Lotharingia – that is, since 925, in the East Frankish kingdom – and Flodoard wrote about them prolifically.⁹⁵ When, in 931, Count Heribert submitted to Otto’s father Henry, it was probably performed in an effort to secure his control of these valuable estates.⁹⁶ The church of Rheims would also have sought the co-operation of Ottonian rulers and magnates to help safeguard its possessions.

Indeed, the defence of church property was one of Flodoard’s key aims in composing the *Historia*. Although one might naturally assume that Flodoard wrote in support of property claims – a relatively common function of institutional historiography – this prominent concern has seldom attracted comment, let alone scrutiny.⁹⁷ The lack of attention paid to this aspect of the *Historia* is all the more striking given Flodoard’s personal involvement in disputes such as the Kusel episode, as well as the fact that *gesta* often served as practical property inventories.⁹⁸ For Sot, Flodoard’s enunciation of church lands was one aspect of his creation of a sacred topography, a landscape of places connected through their association with the saints of Rheims and the translations of relics.⁹⁹ However, we should not ignore the fact that Flodoard’s concentration on property was an advertisement of Rheims’ claims. This

⁹⁴ *HRE*, 210 (III.10) (for possible identifications of these sites, see notes 52, 55–6). The lands in Thuringia and Austrasia were also recorded in the will of St Remigius as preserved by Flodoard: see Schneider, ‘Remigiusland’, 476–7.

⁹⁵ See Roberts, ‘Flodoard, the Will’, 214–16.

⁹⁶ Flodoard, *Annales*, 49–50 (*s.a.* 931).

⁹⁷ Exceptions emphasising the *Historia*’s explicit property concerns include R. McKitterick, ‘The Church’, in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 3, ed. T. Reuter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 130–62 (146–7); and Roberts, ‘Flodoard, the Will’.

⁹⁸ Cf. the *Gesta* of Auxerre from the 870s, which similarly sought to integrate a history of the diocese with an inventory of its property: C.B. Bouchard, ‘Episcopal *Gesta* and the Creation of a Useful Past in Ninth-Century Auxerre’, *Speculum* 84 (2009): 1–35 (29–33). See also P. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 102–3; G. Declercq, ‘Originals and Cartularies: the Organization of Archival Memory (Ninth–Eleventh Centuries)’, in *Charters and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Society*, ed. K. Heidecker (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 147–70 (156–8).

⁹⁹ Sot, *Un historien*, 319–47, 669–707.

was at least in part prompted by the long-running dispute over the see between Artold and Hugh of Vermandois. When Hugh's father Count Heribert II took over the administration of the church in 925, he took control of the church's possessions for himself. In another of Flodoard's rare autobiographical interpolations, he complained bitterly how Heribert had confiscated his and other canons' benefices (because they had objected to Hugh's 'election') and redistributed them among those he pleased.¹⁰⁰ Heribert's spoliation of church lands and Hugh's 12 years as archbishop complicated the church of Rheims' property rights, for the House of Vermandois (that is, the deposed Hugh and his brothers) now had reasonable claims to land which had belonged to Rheims. Flodoard's emphasis on church lands in the *Historia* – written in the years immediately following Hugh's excommunication at the synod of Ingelheim – was therefore at least in part a reaction to the misappropriation which had taken place over the preceding quarter-century. As his detailed justifications of Rheims' rights in places like the Vosges make clear, Flodoard was not simply taking stock for purposes of local commemoration or internal record-keeping, nor was he merely explaining what made a good prelate in his repetitive statements of bishops' territorial acquisitions: he was, in effect, making arguments, because the church's landed wealth was threatened at precisely this time. Moreover, Flodoard's efforts to rationalise and buttress property claims indicate that he had the prospect of favour at the Ottonian court firmly in mind, for it was clear by 952 that Otto could act as a royal guarantor of Rheims' land.

In addition, we should remember that Louis' regime – with Artold as chancellor and archbishop of Rheims – had more or less been propped up by Otto since 946, when he intervened to have Louis released from captivity and Artold reinstated. This bailout put the West Frankish kingdom firmly in the orbit of Otto's realm. Even after the synod of

¹⁰⁰ *HRE*, 412 (IV.20). See also H. Schwager, *Graf Heribert II. von Soissons, Omois, Meaux, Madrie sowie Vermandois (900/06–943) und die Francia (Nord-Frankreich) in der 1. Hälfte des 10. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Lassleben, 1994), 65.

Ingelheim, it was by no means certain that the struggle for the see of Rheims was actually over, or that the peace between Louis and Hugh the Great would hold. Though excommunicate, Hugh of Vermandois still loomed in the background, and he actively pursued his restoration (with the support of his brothers and several bishops) following Artold's death in 961.¹⁰¹ And as we saw, in spite of the truce agreed by Louis and Hugh the Great in 950, hostilities were renewed in 952, and the relationship between the two remained uneasy. The respective positions of Artold and Louis thus hinged on Otto's backing.

A third reason to read the *Historia* as an appeal to Otto is Flodoard's repeated invocation of St Remigius as the enforcer of Rheims' property claims. In an effort to enhance the prestige of his own office, Archbishop Hincmar had vigorously promoted the cult of Rheims' patron saint and constructed a reputation for the Merovingian bishop as the *apostolus Francorum* on account of his famous baptism of Clovis.¹⁰² Hincmar also deployed Remigius as the defender of church property par excellence, relating in his *Vita Remigii* and other works how numerous individuals had been visited by the saint in dreams and visions and savagely beaten for their encroachment of church property.¹⁰³ Flodoard reproduced all these accounts in his *Historia* and added others, such as the two visitations concerning Kusel (Herigar of Mainz in 913–18 and Ragembold in 951–2). He thoroughly embraced Hincmar's agenda, and the church successfully recruited tenth-century Carolingian kings as patrons of the cult and the monastery of Saint-Rémi.¹⁰⁴ This upturn of interest in St Remigius also crept into the Ottonian sphere: Otto's sister Gerberga, Louis' influential queen and a key player in

¹⁰¹ Flodoard, *Annales*, 150–4 (*s.a.* 962).

¹⁰² J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, 'History in the Mind of Archbishop Hincmar', in *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to R.W. Southern*, eds. R.H.C. Davis and J.M. Wallace-Hadrill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 43–70; Isaïa, *Remi de Reims*, 417–64.

¹⁰³ P.E. Dutton, *The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 169–94; Isaïa, *Remi de Reims*, 495–7.

¹⁰⁴ P. Depreux, 'Saint Remi et la royauté carolingienne', *Revue Historique* 115 (1991): 235–60; idem, 'Imbuendis ad fidem prefulgidum surrexit lumen gentibus: la dévotion à saint Remi de Reims aux IXe et Xe siècles', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 35, no. 2 (1992): 111–29; Isaïa, *Remi de Reims*, 617–54.

‘international’ affairs around 950, was a prominent patron of the cult.¹⁰⁵ The 948 council of Ingelheim, overseen by Otto and his episcopacy, took place in a church dedicated to St Remigius. One also notes that Otto, in his confirmation of Kusel for Saint-Rémi in 952, styled himself as a successor to the Merovingian Frankish kings (*nostri sane antecessores*) who had previously given this land to the *beatissimus* and *sanctissimus* Remigius.¹⁰⁶ In his 965 confirmation of Saint-Rémi’s rights to Kusel, Otto praised Remigius as the *doctor Francorum*.¹⁰⁷ In his *Historia*, Flodoard explicitly linked the church of Rheims with Otto’s favoured royal monastery of St Maurice in Magdeburg by recounting how, with Artold’s consent, the king had obtained Rémois relics for the initial foundation, and subsequently how numerous miracles had been wrought there.¹⁰⁸ Flodoard’s *Historia* was thus a timely reminder of the fabled history and legendary traditions to which a ruler could lay claim, and there is much to indicate that the cult of Remigius was indeed attractive to Otto.

One might reasonably question why Flodoard did not heap praise on Otto if all this is in fact the case. In fact, the historian never heaped praise on any of his contemporaries (except perhaps Robert of Trier in his dedication of the *Historia*). Flodoard was an unusually terse writer, as has been shown in his measured use of titles such as *princeps* and *domnus*.¹⁰⁹ In his *Annales*, he seldom offered explanations for why individuals did the things they did. He kept his opinions to himself.¹¹⁰ This was likely in part because he had personally suffered at the hands of Count Heribert in the course of the Rheims schism: unable to know the ultimate outcome of the dispute and circumspect about his previous misfortunes, he refrained from criticising or praising either Hugh of Vermandois or Artold, even after Ingelheim.

¹⁰⁵ On Gerberga’s power, see MacLean, ‘Reform, Queenship’; and on her sponsorship of Saint-Rémi, see Depreux, ‘Saint Remi’, 255–6.

¹⁰⁶ *DO I*, 237–8 (no. 156).

¹⁰⁷ *DO I*, 400–1 (no. 286).

¹⁰⁸ *HRE*, 71 (I.4).

¹⁰⁹ Jacobsen, ‘Die Titel’.

¹¹⁰ For a recent interpretation of Flodoard’s lack of judgement, see Koziol, *Politics of Memory*, 416–22.

Likewise, he had little to say in favour or against Louis or Hugh the Great. One should not therefore expect to find any glowing acclamation of Otto in his works. What one does find, however, is a subtle warming towards and interest in Ottonian political activity in his historical works: some years ago, Gian Andri Bezzola argued that Flodoard's representation of Otto and his brother Brun gradually assumed a more patriarchal and dynastic character. The historian was by no means sentimental about the relative decline of Carolingian power in West Francia.¹¹¹

The church of Rheims needed Otto, and Flodoard shows in his *Historia* that he and his archbishop were rather receptive to the idea of Ottonian overlordship. This may seem surprising in light of Rheims' close links with the Carolingians. But it was really only under Charles the Simple, Louis and Lothar that Rheims became a truly Carolingian spiritual capital. Indeed, prior to Hincmar's episcopate, the church's relationship with the Carolingian family had been rather tempestuous. In 717–18, Charles Martel punished the church for supporting his rivals by deposing Bishop Rigobert.¹¹² Charlemagne almost completely ignored Rheims, perhaps because his rival brother Carloman had been buried in the monastery of Saint-Rémi in 771.¹¹³ Rheims returned to prominence under Louis the Pious, but this ended abruptly with the disastrous deposition of Archbishop Ebbo in 835.¹¹⁴ All these things Flodoard knew well and related in the *Historia*, and this reveals why the historian was able to look beyond contemporary Carolingian rulers in his own kingdom to a new dynastic power flourishing in the east: the supposed bond between the Carolingian dynasty and the church of Rheims had never really existed. The idea was promoted by Hincmar at a time

¹¹¹ G.A. Bezzola, *Das ottonische Kaisertum in der französischen Geschichtsschreibung des 10. und beginnenden 11. Jahrhunderts* (Cologne: H. Böhlau Nachf., 1956), 20–54.

¹¹² *HRE*, 159–60 (II.12); see P. Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel* (London: Longman, 2000), 67.

¹¹³ *HRE*, 170–1 (II.17); see J.L. Nelson, 'Carolingian Royal Funerals', in *Rituals of Power: From Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, eds. F. Theuvs and J.L. Nelson (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 131–84 (143–5; 151–2, n. 82); Isaïa, *Remi de Reims*, 398–400; Schneider, *Erzbischof Hinkmar*, 29–65.

¹¹⁴ *HRE*, 183–9 (II.20); see in general M. de Jong, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814–840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

when Carolingian kings were the only conceivable royal family. The tenth century, on the other hand, was very different. Indeed, Artold was made archbishop in 931 under the auspices of a non-Carolingian ruler, the Bosonid Raoul. A claim to Frankish identity was one thing that Merovingian, Carolingian and Ottonian kings all had in common.¹¹⁵ Flodoard was not attached to any particular family or dynasty; he was pragmatic.¹¹⁶ By harking back to the time of St Remigius, Flodoard appealed to an imagined pan-Frankish past, to a time when the ‘borders’ between the western and eastern kingdoms had seemingly not existed. In St Remigius the church of Rheims had a potent resource, the saintly bishop who had ushered the Franks into the Catholic faith. By acknowledging his Merovingian *antecessores* in his diploma of 952 for Saint-Rémi, Otto showed that this was a lineage to which he was ready to lay claim for himself.

Conclusion

From this exhaustive unpicking of an apparently inconsequential disagreement over a middling monastery in the Vosges, we can draw three points. The first, at a basic level, is that the Kusel affair should be linked with Conrad the Red’s dramatic fall from grace and ensuing rebellion against Otto in 953. Conrad’s involvement in Kusel has never been recognised from Flodoard’s cryptic testimony of the status of Rheims’ Vosges properties in the tenth century. The episode’s role in Conrad’s humiliation is suggested by, firstly, the timing of Otto’s confirmation of the monastery of Saint-Rémi’s ownership of Kusel, which came halfway between Conrad’s well-known snub by Otto at Easter and his open break with the king a year later, and, secondly, Otto’s mysterious about-face after having denied Rheims’ claims when he met Flodoard in 951. The incident provides a further example of Otto’s practice of

¹¹⁵ On the Ottonians perceiving themselves as Frankish rulers, see above all C. Brühl, *Deutschland–Frankreich. Die Geburt zweier Völker*. 2nd edn. (Cologne: Böhlau, 1995). See also T. Reuter, ‘The Ottonians and Carolingian tradition’, in idem, *Medieval Politics*, 268–83.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Bezzola, *Das ottonische Kaisertum*, 54.

confiscating property to punish insubordinate magnates. But unlike other such deprivations, which all concerned lesser men, Otto was wary of alienating the powerful Conrad, and so the diploma was issued under the pretence of a petition to the king. Given Conrad's clear problems with the northern Lotharingians and his attempts to construct a power base closer to his principal Franconian counties in the south, it seems rather unlikely that the duke would have willingly conceded the land to Rheims at this time. For Conrad, frustrated by his king's lack of support for his endeavours in Lotharingia, this may well have been the final straw.

Flodoard's reluctance to tell us much of anything about this brings us to a second point, which is that medieval histories could serve multiple purposes and could mean different things to different audiences. As previous work has shown, Flodoard's *Historia Remensis ecclesiae* had discernible benefits for the community of Rheims and the edification of its clergy. However, there was also a more functional, pragmatic aspect of the text, and this can only be appreciated by homing in on various contexts of production: the turbulent political situation in the years it was written (on both local and regnal levels), Flodoard's own charges and activities, and the work's dissemination and reception. Close scrutiny of these circumstances indicates that Flodoard did not conceive of the *Historia* as simply 'local history'. The culmination of his narrative is the synod of Ingelheim in 948, which resolved a controversy that had wracked the Church since 925. By stressing the settlement of this schism, and by waxing lyrical about the miracles of the holy Remigius and the leadership of the peerless Hincmar, Flodoard wanted to show the wider world that this storied bishopric was ready once more to assume its rightful place in the governance of the Frankish world. But such prominence was to be found in the vigorous Ottonian kingdom, an empire in all but name by the early 950s.

A final point, then, is that the rapid growth of Ottonian hegemony in the 940s and 950s might not necessarily have been considered such a bad thing by institutions and

individuals in newly subordinate regions such as the West Frankish kingdom. We should not automatically assume that Flodoard and his archbishops were attached to Carolingian tradition simply because the Carolingians patronised Saint-Rémi during his lifetime. Otto offered Rheims prestige, the potential for further endowment, and valuable protection of its extensive Lotharingian and East Frankish estates. The case of Kusel demonstrates the effectiveness of this strategy, for after 952 it remained in the hands of Saint-Rémi into the twelfth century and beyond.¹¹⁷ Flodoard's evidence – and his silence on thorny contemporary issues – shows us just how thoroughly the church of Rheims was tied up in Ottonian politics. This new Frankish dynasty had the potential to restore the diocese to its former greatness. The historian's acute sense of a gravitational shift of power to the east (and his willingness to accept it) therefore shows us what made Otto's hegemony possible. In this respect, Flodoard is much more of an 'Ottonian historian' than has hitherto been realised.

Under Otto's stewardship, Louis IV enjoyed a productive final few years, ensuring that there was no question that his son Lothar – Otto's nephew – should succeed him when he died in 954. However, the Ottonian grip on West Francia would last only for about 20 years after Ingelheim. The western monarchy was revitalised under Lothar, who took full advantage of further turmoil in Lotharingia to reassert Carolingian claims to the region. Otto II's premature death in 983 hastened the drift of West Francia out of Ottonian orbit, and after the accession of Hugh Capet in 987, the break between west and east crystallised. Of course, in the early 950s, none of this could be known. Flodoard's *Historia* offers a snapshot of aspirations and expectations for a future which never materialised. In 952, however, further

¹¹⁷ In addition to the later royal confirmations cited above, see Gerbert of Aurillac's 984 letter on behalf of Archbishop Adalbero to Archbishop Willigis of Mainz asking him to look after Saint-Rémi's Vosges possessions: P. Riché and J.P. Callu, eds. and trans., *Gerbert d'Aurillac. Correspondance*. 2 vols. (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1993), i, 54–7 (no. 27). The polyptych of Saint-Rémi records dues owed to the monastery from Kusel and Altenglan in the early eleventh century: J.-P. Devroey, ed., *Le polyptyque et les listes de cens de l'abbaye de Saint-Remi de Reims (IXe–XIe siècles)* (Rheims: Académie nationale de Reims, 1984), 121–2. See also Poirier-Coutansais, *Les abbayes*, 128, 138, and map 8.

incorporation of the West Frankish kingdom into the growing Ottonian sphere of influence would have looked a decent bet.

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